GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2736
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2008
UNSCIENTIFIC COAL MINING
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Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether a vast area in and around Raniganj and Asansol Coalfields has become dangerous due to unscientific coal mining;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith number of accidents occurred in these mines during the last three years and the current year; and

(c) the details of the measures taken by the Government to stop such accidents?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA)

(a) & (b): Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL) was formed mostly from fragmented small mining units of erstwhile owners. In the pre-nationalized period, superior quality of non-coking coal at shallow depth was mined out indiscriminately without adequate scientific planning and due regard for safety & conservation.

There have been five major subsidence occurrences during the last three years. Incidents of subsidence have occurred in both the leasehold areas of ECL and outside since long. Most of the subsidence on the surface has occurred over old abandoned mine areas where workings had been done by the erstwhile mine owners. Some of the left out coal near the surface, which could not be extracted scientifically, had been exploited illegally by miscreants. The effect of illegal mining and unscientific mining done by erstwhile private mine owners have resulted in many unstable areas in and around Raniganj coalfield. In some instances the dwellings of local people constructed over unsafe areas had been affected by subsidence.

(c): The following measures have been taken to deal with subsidence & fire in the Raniganj coal mines:

a) Stabilization of declared unstable areas by hydro-pneumatic stowing

b) Filling up of subsided areas by earth & sand and raising plantation.

c) In the recent fire near Nimcha village the scientific institution CIMFR,Dhanbad has been engaged to detect the extension of fire towards the village and measures to be taken for protecting the village.

d) Rehabilitation of people atTected by subsidence in EMRC & Coal Conservation and Development Activities (CCDA) projects

e) Master I Action Plan prepared by Central Mine Planning & Design Institute (CMPDI) for Raniganj coalfield for rehabilitation of affected persons is under processing for approval in the Government of India.

f) Activities for biological reclamation of fire areas are:

i) Dozing, leveling and filling of cracks.

ii) Laying and spreading O.5m thick soil layer over dozed area

iii) Preparing bandh/embankmcnt in the area covered with soil for developing number of small pools

iv) Raising plantations over the areas so reclaimed.